



Civic Arts Commission

Civic Arts Commission Meeting

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

6:00 PM

Meeting Location: Tarea Hall Pittman South Branch Library

1901 Russell St, Berkeley, CA 94703

REVISED AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Jonathan Bachrach (Vice Chair), District 1

Dana Blecher, District 6

Lisa Bullwinkel, District 4

Devi Dutta-Choudhury, Mayor

Audrey Truc-Dao Kramer, District 7

Peter Montgomery (Chair), District 8

Eduardo Pineda, District 5

Sean Vaughn Scott, District 3

Cameron Woo, District 2

3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of Huchiun (*Hooch-yoon*), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (*Cho-chen-yo*) speaking Ohlone (*Oh-low-nee*) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona (*Vuh-roh-nuh*) Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. We acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan (*Lih-Shawn*) Tribe and create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this Land Acknowledgement

4. PUBLIC COMMENT (for items not on the agenda)

5. COMMUNICATION (received from the public for items not on the agenda)
None

6. CHAIR'S REPORT

7. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS (All items for presentation, discussion, and possible action)

- a) **Presentation Item:** Berkeley Vibrant Storefront Initiative (20 minutes)
Link here: <https://www.zeroemptyspaces.com/>
Introduced by Carianna Arredondo, Assistant to the City Manager (Attachment 1)
Public Comment

- b) **Discussion Item:** Civic Arts Fiscal Year 2027 Workplan (30 minutes)
Introduced by Carianna Arredondo, Assistant to the City Manager (Attachment 2)
Public Comment

- c) **Action Item:** FY26 Arts Programs Grant Awards (7 minutes)
Presented by Grants Subcommittee (Attachment 3)
Recommendation: Approval of FY26 Arts Program Grant Awards
Public Comment

- d) **Discussion Item:** Civic Arts FY 27-28 Budget Discussion (20 minutes)
Introduced by Eduardo Pineda, Public Art Subcommittee Chair
Public Comment

8. STAFF REPORT

- a) Civic Arts Program Updates, Carianna Arredondo
- b) Grants Program Updates, Hilary Amnah

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Grants
 - Dana Blecher, Chair
 - Lisa Bullwinkel
 - Cameron Woo

- b) Public Art
 - Eduardo Pineda, Chair

- Jonathan Bachrach
- Devi Dutta-Choudhury

c) Policy Subcommittee

- Lisa Bullwinkel, Chair
- Dana Blecher
- Cameron Woo
- Audrey Truc-Dao Kramer

d) Representative on Design Review Committee

- Devi Dutta-Choudhury

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Draft Minutes of April 22, 2026 Meeting (Attachment 3)

From: Commission Secretary

Recommendation: Approval of April 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Public Comment

11. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

12. ADJOURNMENT

Attachments:

1. Berkeley Vibrant Storefront Initiative
2. Civic Arts Commission Draft FY 27 Workplan & FY 26 Workplan
3. FY26 Arts Programs Grant Awards
4. Draft Minutes of April 22, 2026 Meeting

Staff Contact:

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person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission or committee for further information.

ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION:

This meeting is being held in a wheelchair accessible location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the ADA Program Coordinator by phone (510) 981-6418 or by TTY/TDD (510) 981-6347 at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.



Property Owner Benefits

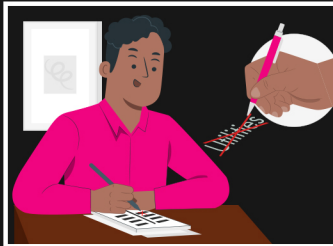
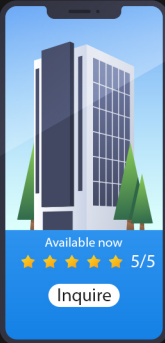


Daily Activation Of Space
Supporting Walkability
& Neighboring Tenants

Vacancy Management
Helps Mitigate
Maintenance Issues

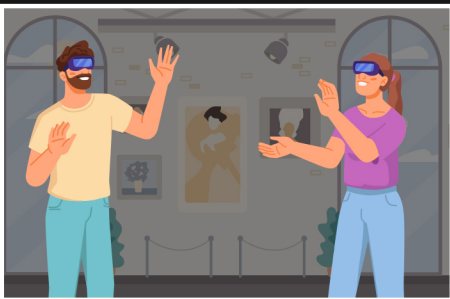


Space Remains Listed Available
On The Market While Activated



Takes Utilities
Off Of P&L
Saving Money
On Your
Bottom Line

Property **Mentioned Favorably** In Press Coverage



Receive Matterport **Virtual Reality Walkthrough** Of The Space

Zero Empty Spaces Serves As One Point Of Contact



Civic Arts Policy Subcommittee Draft FY 2027 Work Plan

The Policy Subcommittee shall support the Civic Arts Commission by advancing policy recommendations, monitoring Council referrals, and identifying opportunities to strengthen Berkeley's arts and culture ecosystem. In FY 2027, the Policy Subcommittee will focus on the following priorities:

1. Event Producer Policy Recommendations

Ensure that the Event Producer Policy Recommendations are appropriately presented to City Council, reviewed, and acted upon following their anticipated Council consideration in June 2026.

The Subcommittee may continue to monitor implementation, identify any follow-up policy needs, and support staff and the Commission in advancing recommendations that strengthen Berkeley's event production landscape.

2. Civic Arts Grant Funding and General Fund Support

Advocate for the preservation and restoration of full Civic Arts grant funding levels in the General Fund budget.

The Subcommittee should continue to emphasize that any future arts revenue measure or dedicated arts funding source should supplement, rather than replace or reduce, existing General Fund support for Civic Arts grants, programs, and core operations.

3. Civic Arts Staffing and Program Capacity

Advocate for the reinstatement of the Economic Development Project Coordinator position, or an equivalent Civic Arts staffing resource, in future budgets.

The Subcommittee should continue to advocate for a sustainable staffing model that reflects the ongoing Civic Arts workload within the City Manager's Office, including grants administration, policy development, Commission support, public art coordination, cultural planning, and arts sector engagement.

4. Cultural Arts District Policy and West Berkeley Cultural Arts District

Continue supporting the development of a Cultural Arts District in West Berkeley while also advancing a broader policy framework for the establishment, recognition, and support of Cultural Arts Districts in Berkeley.

Building on the FY 2026 work plan and the City's experience with the African American Arts and Culture District of South & West Berkeley / Lorin District, the Subcommittee shall work to articulate policy guidelines for future Cultural Arts Districts. This may include criteria for district formation, community leadership, cultural significance, geographic boundaries, governance, sustainability, and alignment with potential state designation opportunities.

5. Arts Activation in Vacant Commercial Spaces

Explore and develop policy recommendations for utilizing vacant or underused commercial spaces in Berkeley for arts and cultural uses, with a particular focus on retail frontage, storefront activation, and corridors such as San Pablo Avenue and University Avenue.

This work may include reviewing existing Economic Development efforts, inviting staff presentations, researching models from other cities, and identifying feasible policy tools or pilot opportunities to support temporary or longer-term arts activation in vacant spaces including live/work opportunities.

6. Berkeley Cultural Trust

Support the development, advocacy, and long-term sustainability of the newly revived Berkeley Cultural Trust.

The Subcommittee should help ensure ongoing Civic Arts Commission representation at Berkeley Cultural Trust meetings and identify opportunities for alignment between the Trust, the Commission, City staff, and the broader arts and culture sector.

7. Poet Laureate Program

Continue advocating for the establishment of a permanent Berkeley Poet Laureate Program.

The Subcommittee may support the development of program guidelines, funding recommendations, selection processes, roles and expectations, and potential partnerships to ensure the program is sustainable and aligned with the City's cultural goals.

8. Turtle Island Monument Project

Monitor and support resolution of the Turtle Island Monument project, including identifying any outstanding policy, process, funding, or interdepartmental coordination issues that require Commission attention.

The Subcommittee should work with staff to clarify the project's current status and determine whether further Commission or Council action is needed.

9. Tracking System for Commission Referrals and Council Actions

Develop or recommend a tracking system for Civic Arts Commission referrals, recommendations, and items transmitted to City Council.

The purpose of this system would be to support continuity of operations, improve transparency, track Council action and follow-up needs, and help future Commissioners and staff understand the status of prior Commission work.

Project Name	Status	Council Referral
Aquatic Park Tile Wall	In Progress	No
BART Plaza Sound Installation	In Progress	No
Framed Art Purchases for City Buildings	Complete	No
Home Sculpture De-installation	Complete	No
Jean LaMarr Sculptural Seating + Grinding Rock (Ohlone Park)	In Progress	No
Lara Kaur Artwork (West Service Center)	Complete	No
Measure T-1: MLK Youth Service Center	In Progress	No
Measure T-1: Willard Clubhouse	Complete	No
Peace Wall Conservation	Complete	No
Po Shu Wang Signage and Bell	Complete	No
Re-installation of Romare Bearden Artwork	Not Started	No
Turtle Island Monument	In Progress / Delayed	No
Utility Box Mural Program	Not Started	No
William Wareham Sculpture Conservation + Reinstallation	Complete	No
Eric Powell Gates Conservation	In Progress	No
Santa Fe Right of Way Park	In Progress	No
Dona Spring Memorial	Not Started	Yes - Mayor Jesse Arreguin – Nov 28, 2023
Measure T-1: South Berkeley Senior Center	In Progress	No
Measure T-1: African American Health Resource Center	In Progress	No
Aquatic Park Sculpture	Not Started	No
City Flag, Song, and Motto	Not Started	Yes - Ben Bartlett – Dec 13, 2022 (Flag tied to Kris Worthington 2017)
Hidden Gems: Berkeley Hills Stairways	Not Started	No
Mural Commemorating Black Lives Matter Movement	Not Started	No
Telegraph Avenue Public Art Project	Not Started	No
Telegraph Crosswalk Murals	Not Started	Yes - Rigel Robinson – Sept 24, 2019
Harrison Street Corridor Project	Not Started	No
Replacement Mural for Center for Independent Living	Not Started	Yes - Linda Maio & Cheryl Davila – June 13, 2017
Family Friendly Art	Not Started	Yes - Kris Worthington – Oct 30, 2018
Transfer Station Replacement (Upcoming)	Not Started	No
Dreamland Park (Upcoming)	Not Started	No
Waterfront Ferry Terminal (Upcoming)	Not Started	No

FY26 Arts Programs Funding Scenario

Organization	Program	Summary	City	Council District	Score	Award
Jazzline Institute	Free Jazz and Blues Masterclass & Jam Session	Free jazz and blues masterclass and jam session for the community with four of our community's renowned artists	San Jose	District 4	463	\$5,000
San Francisco Mime Troupe	Free Summer Shows in the Park	"Free Shows in the Parks" embody San Francisco Mime Troupe's commitment to accessible and thought-provoking and empowering social change theater.	San Francisco	District 8 District 4 District 5 District 1	456	\$5,000
SAN FRANCISCO CHAMBER ORCHESTRA INC	Admission-Free Classical Music Concerts for People of all Ages and Backgrounds	The San Francisco Chamber Orchestra will present a season of free Family Concerts, Very First Concerts and MainStage Concerts.	San Francisco	District 1 District 3 District 4 District 7	456	\$5,000
Pacific Center for Human Growth	Creating Queer Joy Through Arts Excellence at Berkeley Pride	A mural activity for youth to participate in at the Berkeley Pride festival	Berkeley	District 4	438	\$5,000
KITKA INC	Kitka & Kurbasy: Songs of the Ukrainian Forest	A three day artist residency with Kitka and Kurbasy Ensemble from Ukraine including a collaborative concert and free vocal workshop	Oakland	District 4 District 1	425	\$5,000
Bay Area Creative BAC	The Berkeley Poetry Slam	The Berkeley Poetry Slam amplifies voices, fostering artistic excellence and community connection through spoken word performances, competitions, and workshops.	Hayward	District 8	425	\$5,000
PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA & CHORALE	Philharmonia in Berkeley 2025-26	Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale will produce five sets of concerts in venues in Berkeley over the 2025-26 Season.	San Francisco	District 7 District 8 District 4	419	\$5,000
CALIFORNIA POETS IN THE SCHOOLS	Black Parents of Berkeley Writing Circles	Two Black Parents of Berkeley Writing Circles will be hosted. A printed anthology of poetry will be created and distributed.	Santa Rosa	District 3	419	\$5,000
CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING	We Fight Back: Art for Action	Bringing cross-disability community members and artists together to create protest art to amplify the demand for disability rights and justice.	Berkeley	District 3	413	\$0
The Marsh A Breeding Ground for New Performance	Marsh Berkeley Artist in Residence Program	Marsh Berkeley Artist in Residency Program where an artist is supported as they develop their show for a MainStage Run.	San Francisco	District 4	413	\$0
Cubacaribe	Dance All Day 2025	A two-day workshop bringing together an amazing faculty of the top Cuban & Caribbean dance, percussion, and song instructors.	San Francisco	District 8	400	\$0
OPTIONS RECOVERY SERVICES	Recovery through the Arts	Options' Reentry through the Arts Program provides arts activities and arts training opportunities for clients recovering from Substance Use Disorder.	Berkeley	District 4	394	\$0
DOROTHY DAY HOUSE A NONPROFIT PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION	The Sanctuary Courtyard: A Collective Art Transformation	Reimagining DDH's courtyard through local murals and artistic enhancements to create an inclusive, healing space for housed and unhoused residents.	Berkeley	District 4	381	\$0
Nippon Kobo	Nippon Kobo Family - Musubi Trio x Tonko House	A free-admission chamber music concert featuring the collaboration between music by Musubi Trio and animation film by Tonko House	Albany	District 2	381	\$0
ALTERNATIVE THEATER ENSEMBLE	When They Ask If We Were Real	Theatre/art workshops with Berkeley residents that engage with their questions of meaning and action in our political and technological landscape	San Rafael	District 1 District 4	369	\$0
Mozart Youth Camerata	The Berkeley String Quartet	The Berkeley String Quartet will create new music programs catalyzed by stories submitted by members of the Berkeley community.	Oakland	District 7 District 6 Unsure at this time	344	\$0
Veteran Comic Con	Veteran Comic Con	Our programs aspire to alleviate symptoms of PTSD through therapeutic arts like visual arts, writing, performance and cosplay.	Oakland	Unsure at this time	238	\$0



Civic Arts Commission

**Draft Minutes
Civic Arts Commission
Wednesday, April 22, 2026
6:00 PM**

**Meeting Location: Tarea Hall Pittman South Branch Library
1901 Russell St, Berkeley, CA 94703**

1. CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 PM

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Dutta-Choudhury, Montgomery, Pineda, Scott, Truc-Dao Kramer, Woo

Staff Present: Carianna Arredondo, Assistant to the City Manager, Hilary Amnah, Grants Program Lead, David White, Deputy City Manager

Staff Absent: Mark Salinas, Public Art Program Lead

General Public Present: 2

3. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, led by Chair Montgomery

4. PUBLIC COMMENT: 1

5. COMMUNICATIONS: 0

6. CHAIR'S REPORT: N/A

7. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, & ACTION ITEMS

a) **Action Item:** Selection of Policy and Grants Subcommittee Chairs and Members (5 minutes)

Introduced by Carianna Arredondo, Assistant to the City Manager

M/S (Bullwinkel/Blecher) to defer selection of Policy and Grants Subcommittee Chairs and Members to a future meeting.

Vote: Ayes — Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Dutta-Choudhury, Kramer, Montgomery, Pineda, Scott, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — None; Absent — None

Public Comment: 0

- b) **Discussion Items (7b-7e):** City of Berkeley Budget Updates, Continuity and Tracking of Pending Referrals and Policy Items, Civic Arts Commission Workplan Preparation, and Berkeley Cultural Trust Updates.
Discussion Held, Public Comment: 0

8. STAFF REPORTS

- a) Civic Arts Program Updates, Carianna Arredondo
- b) Grants Program Updates, Hilary Amnah

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a) Grants – Will plan to convene meeting to draft Grant Subcommittee workplan and discuss grants cycle.
- b) Public Art – Will plan to convene meeting to draft Public Art Subcommittee workplan.
- c) Policy – Will plan to convene meeting to draft Policy Subcommittee workplan.
- d) Design Review – None

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M/S (Pineda/ Blecher) to approve Draft Minutes of March 25, 2026 Meeting
Vote: Ayes — Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Dutta-Choudhury, Montgomery, Pineda, Scott, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — Kramer; Absent — None.
Public Comment: 0

11. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS: .2

12. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM by unanimous consent.
Vote: All Ayes

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